THE MATERIAL INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES.

ORATION BY HON, CALEB CUSHING, EFORE THE UNITED STATE: AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY, DELIVERED AT RICHMOND, VA., OCTOBER 287H, 1868.

MR PRESIDENT: I have to solicit your approbation of the train of thought which it is my purpose to follow on this occasion. You will appreciate my reductance to occupy your attention with matters of agricultural science more familiar to you than to myself, and to the discussion of which it would be impossible for me to impart anything either of information or of ornament. I propose to leave the beaten track, therefore, and to submitto you a series of observations which, if novel for such an occasion, are yet, in my judgment, altogether appropriate to it, and at the same time of universal concernment.

ing the productions of the earth, natural or cultivated, vegetable, animal, and mineral—is undoubtedly the primary interest and art of man. It is the basis of civili-

regetable, animal, and mineral—is undoubtedly the primary interest and art of man. It is the basis of civilization. It is the indispensable great element of social and political stability and of national wealth and power. Secondary to agriculture is mechanical production, the claboration of natural commodities; and, finally, comes the exchange of all commodities, natural and artificial—commerce. All these things—in their inseparable connex-ion—constitute the material interests of society.

Hence, the natural and necessary subject of attention at all assemblages like the present is of the material interests of society—not excluding moral interests. God forbid! Material interests are in subordination always to moral ones. But, on such an occasion as this, a disquisition of theology or of ethical philosophy would be as little appropriate as one of rhetoric or logic. Although, meanwhile, the latter always are to be assumed for the ground-work, as the former for the animating spirit, of all our thoughts on this and every other occasion.

I repeat, our natural and necessary subject at an agricultural meeting is of the material interests of men; and at a meeting of the United States Agricultural Society of the material interests of the people of the United States. It is the material interests of the people of the United States, then, in certain particular relations, which constitute my subject; in order to the due comprehension of which it needs that we proceed first with a few brief truths to analyze, and set forth in plain view, the discipation of the discount of the order to the decements of the actual condition—geographical, social, and political—of the United States.

There are four great regions of the earth, two in the low of did and two in the New, which, by reason of their

social, and political—of the United States.

There are four great regions of the earth, two in the Old World and two in the New, which, by reason of their geographical unity of character within defined limits, but on a vast scale, are the natural seats of pre-eminent and powerful empire. They are China, Russia, Brazil, and the United States. In other regions of the earth are immense fertile plains, affluently watered by rains or rivers, as in the valleys of the Ganges or Indus, of the Po or the Loire, of the Orinoco or the La Plata; but how secondary is each of these to those mighty combinaow secondary is each of these to those mighty combina now secondary is each of these to those migraly combina-tions of earth and water of which the land-borders of the Yang-Tze, the Volga, the Amazon, and the Mississippi are but samples, in the favored countries of China and Russis, of Brazil and the United States. Comparing these two last-named countries together, that portion of the United States which lies between the Atlantic ocean and he Rocky mountains most nearly resembles China in soil, limate, rivers, relations to the earth's cosmical motion, and other natural facts, and is alike capable of receiving and other natura facts, and is aline capable of receiving and retaining the same numerous population; in geographical configuration, but not in climate, the same part of the United States also most nearly resembles Beasil. But the similitude in geographical facts is closest between the United States and Russia. Affice, we extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, accomplishing between us the circuit of the earth. Allice, with large deserts and lakes and gold-bearing mountains to intervene in the each, great river systems flow through valleys of immense extent and of marvellous fecundity into the opposite waters of the Atlantic and the Pacific. Each of them stretches along the temperate zone of a continent, on horseback as it were, across its loftiest mountains; and each of them, as a region of earth, and speaking now geent; because, in each, of its incalculable capacity of opulation, by reason of its soil, its rivers, its climate, ad its maritime position—because of the unexhausted operabundance of antilled land in each inviting the care

of the cultivator, and because each, of course, in the ex-defined of the cultivator, and because each, of course, in the ex-defined of the season of the each of the ex-defined of the men of Europe and Asia.

For the second great elemental fact in the condition of the people of the United States is, that we are of that master white race which processors which the early state of the exrace, which, wheresoever a lighter shade of man-Europeans with either—the former rules the manifest charter of the providence of od. I say we are of that master white race; and may not say—without derogation of the Slavonic branch of , which has its destiny of greatness yet to attain, and Celtic ingredients which we make that commistant and Cettle ingredients which we make—that committee of English, Scottish, Irish, German, French, Scandina-vian, of which we are—may I not say that we resume in ourselves the natural qualities of race appertaining to the domi-god peoples of modern Europe, Britain, France,

Our political institutions are the next great fact in the

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on the mountain top, as the sunlight in the morning sky, the spirit of independence appeared in the wilds of the New World. I say it is mainly in these two facts that we are to dis-I say it is mainly in these two facts that we are to dis-cover the embryo formation of the present institution of the United States. Elective and representative insti-tutions, which are the essence of republican government we did not create, but we brought them with us from Eng-land, as we did the system of laws for the regulation of priland, as we did the system of laws for the regulation of private rights, which still subsist in aubstance among us, and he at the foundation of republican institutions in each one of the States even of republican America. For the skeleton of the British government is a single executive head, a legislative assembly of two chambers, and a free judicature, duly associated of learned men and men of the people; and that is the skeleton of the people; and that is the skeleton of the people of the States of the

bers, and a free judicature, duly associated of learned men and men of the people; and that is the skeletton of the government of each one of the States of the Union. It is true that in Great Britain the executive head is hereditary, or at least not periodically elected; it is true moreover, that the upper legislative chamber is of mixed hereditariness and executive appointment: whilst each of these agents of sovereignty is elective in the United States. But still the change here was in the method of designation, not in the constituent parts of constitution. And this change composed one half of the revolution; the other half being the consummation of independent government by the formal separation of British America from British Europe. I say, the consummation of independent government; for the establishment of inchosts independent government by legislative assemblies scated here, was almost the first public act of our colonial forefathers. And so the thriteen Anglo-American colonies were transformed—may I not say, transfigured?—into the thirteen American States.

Now, I pray you to note—for it is material to what I shall have to say hereafter—that in all this there was no job work of political theorists. The Declaration of Independence, it is true, in which the United Colonies announced the fact of their separation from the metropolis, and the inducement of the act, did preface the exhibition of those inducements with relation of the general principles of self-constitution and self-government appertaining to every State or people. And its author, Thomas Jefferson, was accustomed, in his contemplation of society, to look beneath its surface into the philosophy of social organization and of government; but he was most practical in his objects, and in practice always sined to conciliate together the two co-essential conditions of liberty and of order. He, as little as Adams, thought of creating a theoretical speculator's republic. It was their common thought to organize the existing society, not to in-

erty and of order. He, as little as Adams, thought of creating a theoretical speculator's republic. It was their common thought to organize the existing society, not to invent a new one. Of such enough were to be had in those days. Theorists abounded, universal reformers, wise overmuch in their own conceit always, yet sometimes not without public estimation. Such men, as we have already observed, had tried their skill in the New World. The saints of the English Commonwealth did their best to fasten a pure theoreacy upon Europe. The Quakers, those visionaries of the denial of the force of ordinances in time of peace, and of ordance in time of war, had fair play in Pennsylvania. Nay, the most approved of all British writers and thinkers on political theory, John Locke, had the two Carolinas placed in his hand to experiment upon ad libitum, and the constitution which he gave, the sum of his wise theories, vanished like a bubble at a breath of the air of America. Theories had to bend to facts, not facts to theories. And thus, I repeat, the political organization of each one of the Anglohad to bend to facts, not facts to theories. And thus, I repeat, the political organization of each one of the Anglo-American colonies, and consequently of each one of the American States, happened; it came to be; it was not created by sophists and speculators; it was born and grew, as man himself grows, by the fruits of earth, and the sun and air of Heaven. And, like man himself also, those constitutions grew up, though with individual differences, yet with absolute, though unconcerted identity of general composition, form, and nature; so as to demonstrate ty the most palpable and most incontrovertible evidence that they were the common result of the same and only cause—namely, the transplantation of the British type of government into the wilderness of America. Nay, look there, before our very eyes, are not the same causes this day at work producing the same results—I will not say in Canada merely, but in that other New World, British Australia? By such means, then, it came to pass in Massachusetts,

By such means, then, it came to pass in Massachusetts, in New York, in Pennsylvania, in Maryland, in Virginia, in the Carolinas, there was a political organization, not on the model of any theoretical Utopia of a More, a Harrington, or a Locke, but of that of the actual and visible government of Great Britain, with substitution of elective in place of some of the breeditary and selected pulpgovernment of Great Britain, with substitution of ecc-tive in place of some of the hereditary and selected pub-lic functionaries, and with addition of a written organic law by the name of "constitution;" but even that, in every case, composed, for the most part, of a bill of rights, and all the rest by compilation from the existing laws of

States, it is clear, was not the realization of any a prior political abstraction or theory, but the practical act of practical men swayed by the moral compulsion of the namely, the flagrancy of revothat they were practical, not theoretical considerations— we have the declaration of the State of Virginia, which we have the declaration of the State of Yighin, which first proposed the change—which suggested the manner of its accomplishment, to wit: by a "convention" of the States—and which authenticated and proclaimed its inducement and object, namely: the protection and promotion of the common commercial interests of the United

of the natural qualities of race appertialing to the polyteople of modern Europe, Britain, France, any?
political listitutions are the next great fact in the son of the United States. It is a trito remark to the son of the United States. It is a trito remark to the son of the United States. It is a trito remark to the son of the United States. It is a trito remark to the states of the States were plained the parent colonies of the States were plained the parent colonies of the States were plained the parent colonies of the Carlot outself-city conditions of opinion. Partians flet clearly condition, and cavaliers from Cromotovich, and the States of the States

we time the wheels of a watch or measure a burrel of lour or a tierce of tobacco. Nay, by calculation of apparent perturbations in the movements of the remoter planets, we ascertain what and where some yet unseen planets, we ascertain what and where some yet unseen cause of the disturbance exists, and directing the telescopic eye to that point a new planet is found rolling in its everlasting rounds. We expose a prepared tablet to the rays of the sun, and they paint upon it a perfect image of whatever objects come within the range of the reflected lines of light. We compress the explosive power of the flaming scintillations of a thunder-bolt within the cavity of a tube from which to hurl destruction and death into the ranks of hostile armies or the streets of beleagured cities. We subject to our will the tion and death into the ranks of hostile armies or the streets of beleagured cities. We subject to our will the indefinite expansibility of matter, and so compel it to drag the rail car on land, and to drive the steamship on river and sea, and to perform the work of a million hands, until our power of action seems limitless almost as creation. We summon out of earth and air the electro-magnetic currents, viewless and occult as a disembodied spirit, and as, with a wish or a flash, they convey out thoughts over continents and oceans—anticipating time, annihilating space. We say to pain, cease—and it ceases. We speak to an assembled multitude, and the winged words we utter, as they issue from our lips, are caught up by the tachygrapher, transmitted by the electric telegraph a thousand miles in the instant, stamped on a million sheets, as if by enchantment, and disseminated over the universe. All these are the marvels of modern science and art—marvels which only do not extert from us continual exclamations of wonder and awe, because, like the great works of nature around us, they that one of the properties of the created; or art thou not rather the creater, God!

Most wonderful, I say, is the intellectual and social activity and efficiency of one times.

Most wonderful, I say, is the intellectual and social

Most wonderful, I say, is the intellectual and social activity and efficiency of our times. We perceive it in the teeming earth, in the crowded city, on the burdened sea; we perceive it in the increased productions of society, and its fixed monuments; we perceive it in our colleges and schools, in the debates of the legislative assembly, the court, the hustings, the pulpit, and the lecture-room; we perceive it in that unimaginable fecundity of human thought of which printing is the prompter, the minister, and the propagator.

Take, as exhibitor, and at the same time as illustration of this fact—take that familiar thing, a newspaper, a rare luxury of the rich once, now the necessary of universal daily life—of the mental life of men—as much as food and drink are of the physical life. How various are the contents of that diurnal sheet—how extensive is the knowledge it imparts—how vast is the field of its action and its usefulness! Whatever wants there may be in the human breast, it shows how they may be satisfied. If it be, as Cowper says, "the herald of a noisy world,"

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The companies of this displace expalation have suggested the state of the state

set would have us to eat and drink by rule of law, and, what is worse, the rule of their own morbid fancies or valetudinary constitutions. Another would be content if it could have all matrimonial ties, and of course all fillal ties, abolished forever. Another would go a little further, and have all the rights and privileges of men transferred to women, without proposing, however, to relinquish the rights and privileges of women, and have these conceded to men. Another set insists that all the varieties of the human race—white, black, red—shall be declared equal by law, and all distinctions of political or domestic subordination, as well as of race sumental. With us, however, it has not been the discovery of new things, the instruments of our progress, so much as that of new uses of those things to the result or end of social improvement. Gunpowder, the mariner's compass, the printing press, the motive power of steam, photography, anasthetic agency, railways, magnetic telegraphing, telescopes, algebra, and fluxional calculus—all these existed long ago, perhaps in the uses, or the thought, at least, of the ancient populations of Asia. I have myself seen much evidence of that in the shattered remnants of the mighty Past of Egypt, India, and China. But it is only in our hands that the marvellous capabilities of these things have been invoked from obscurity and subjected to the ministries of life. Thus we have penetrated by the eye far into the mysterious depths of the celestial firmament, to reveal the motions of the sun and its satellite planets, to behold another sun with its dependent solar system in each one of the glittering stars on high, and to resolve every light speck and ing stars on high, and to resolve every light speck and train of faintest line in the sky into its own vast fields of innumerable worlds. We have calculated the movements of celestial bodies, their several orbits, their consumptions of the limits of a single city to find it. And

sea; we perceive it in the increased productions of society, and its fixed monuments; we perceive it in our
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"Newa from all nations lumbering at his back"—

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sorrowful, the companion of the solitary, and the mes-

When, in a celebrated State paper of the last adminis tration, three eminent statesmen alluded to this law of natural life as applicable, in assigned contingencies, to the relation of the United States to Cuba, the suggestion was reprobated, in some quarters, as a political heresy. Was it such? Did not Washington himself, reserved as he was usually in speech of such matters, express the same idea, in one of his letters to Lee, anticipating, twenty years beforehand, the acquisition of Louisiana? "Whenever the new States," said he, "become so populous and so extended to the westward as really to need it, there will be not power which can decrive them of the there will be no power which can deprive them of the use of the Mississippi." I pray you to weigh well these words—to penetrate into their inner thought—and then decide, if you can, at what point on the continent of North America they cease to have a significance.

any of the conventional bundens or obligations of society. In all these, and many other and grosser absurdities, of doctrine or opinion, our country abounds. I can produce the evidence of all these monatrosities and follies, their guttators and their apostice, their journals and their conventions, and their experimental establishments, and not go outside of the limits of a single city to find it. And thus it happens that so many people in the northern States surrender themselves to the signation of the most abstract of all possible abstractions and the most impractation of all possible abstractions and the most impractation of the common theory may all reform of the representation of all possible abstractions and the most impractation of the common theory may all reform of the representation of the common they have no jurisdiction, who are beyond their reach, and with whose domestic affairs they have no rightful or lawful concern—namely, their fellow-citizens of the independent sovereign States.

We conced to the people of each one of the States, within itself—may, it is their undoubted right and their privileg—chat they discoss at will the abstract doctrine of social philosophy, and try at pleasure all possible experiments of theory and of legislation, and turn and overturn society from top to bottom, subject to the solic condition of maintaining a republican government. There, within itself, is the proper, and the only proper, the abstractions of opinion in these respects which against the constitutions of another, in the sense either of innovation or the size of the old Toesalid of the Astecn; as they conflict the state of the condition of the common federal interests of the size of the individual States.

And yet, have we not the spectacle, year after year, of the Courses of the United States is the constitutions of another, in the sense either of innovation or the continuents of opinion in these respects which against the contribution of the country of the principal country and the proper in the court of t

the common utility of such intervention, as well to alexico as to the United States.

And who shall gainsay us, when that day arrives? Spain? I trow not, Suffice it for her if she have no other or earlier cause of quarrel with the United States. France? We do not call her to account for the progress of her authority in Algeria; nay, we applaud what she is doing there, as in the common interest of civilization; and we should not be sorry to see her, or Spain, do for the sheriff of Morocco and Fes, and the bigots of barbariam he rules, what she has done for Algiers. As little right or cause would she have to complain, and as much to approve, if we should interpose for the redemption of Mexico. England? I think we have no reason to expect—I will not say to apprehend—any jealousy on the part of England. She discerns now in the retrospect what she did not see clearly in the prospect, that, whilst her mission is in Asia, ours is in America. To her, the terminate of the real commencement of the conquest of India.

The Moiras and the Cornwallises, who conquered it for her, learned the lessons of victory at the hunds of one by whom it was honor enough to be defeated, and even so taught, namely, George Washington, of Virginia. England wisely resolves no longer to dispute with us the supremacy of influence in America.

Sir, [addressing Gov. Wise,] to you, who now occupy and adorn the executive chair of the Commonwealth of Virginia, let me say there was a time—now more than twenty years agone, he the days of our youth, in that old deserted hall of the House of Representatives, which echoes no longer to the voice of eloquence—in that fine we resuscitated, we almost created, the life of the United States on the shores of the Pacific ocean. We reminded our countrymen that a forgotten Oregon existed, and that alongside of it was California. At a subsequent time, under the auspices of John Tyler, of Virginia—a name never to be mentioned by me but with reminiscences of respect—we co-operated to "plack up," as it were, Texas" by the locks, "and bring her into the Union. In that so wretched, that so miserable Mexico, there is more than one other Texas, more than one other California, which awaits but the touch of the formative hand, but a breath of the vivifying genius of the people of the United States, to awaken from its lethargy, and become a truly and really American State. When that happens it will be the signal of regmentation to Mexico, as it will be the signal of regmentation to Mexico, as it will be the signal of regmentation and of this part of it especially, with the other colonial States of America. Shall we not then lift up our voices in unison together again as of yore, and appeal from the paltry passions of the hour, from its visionary abstractions, and from its unwholesome sectional agitations, to the nobler and better instincts, the loftier ambitions, and the national sentiments of the people, to the end of the greater glory of the Union?

Gentlemen of the United States Agricultural Society, I pray you, in conclusion

be stated.

Proposals will be opened in this office at mon of the 4th Decement, in the presence of bidders who may choose to be present.

By order of the Secretary of War:

M. C. MEIGS,

In charge of U. S. Capitol Extension

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